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Selecting And Buying Food

FOOD FOR YOUNG FAMILIES



■ How do you spend your food dollar? If yours is a typical family, one-half of your food money goes for meat, milk, and eggs. About one-fifth is spent for vegetables and fruits. The rest is nearly equally divided among grain products, fats, oils, sugars, and sweets, and such miscellaneous items as spices, coffee, tea, and other beverages.

WAYS TO SAVE WHEN BUYING EACH OF THE FOUR FOOD GROUPS

The wise shopper wants to get the most food value for the money. There are ways to save on the food budget when buying each of the four food groups.

Meat Group

It pays to buy meat very carefully since it accounts for a large part of your food budget. Price alone is not a dependable buying guide. Compare the servings per pound with the price. For example, one pound boneless meat makes three to four servings; one pound bone-in meat makes about two servings. Spareribs may cost less per pound than pork loin roast, but the amount of meat per pound is certainly different.

Before deciding on a cut of meat, consider the amount of bone and fat you are buying. It may be better to buy a large cut and divide it into steaks, stew or soup meat, and grind some for hamburger. Meat trimmings, bone, and some of the fat can be used to make soup or gravy.

Price and food value are not always related. Many low-cost meats have high food value. The lean parts of beef, veal, lamb, and pork are

much alike in nutrients. Pork does contain more thiamine.

Beef is the most popular meat, but don't neglect the others. Poultry, veal, lamb, pork, or fish will give variety and may offer better buys. All are an excellent source of high-quality protein and also provide iron, thiamine, riboflavin, and niacin.

Pork, lamb, and beef liver are usually less expensive than calf liver. All are high in food value and all can be prepared to be tasty and tender.

Poultry—young whole chickens (broilers and fryers) are generally good buys. The meaty parts may be used for broiling, frying, and special dishes. The bony parts and giblets are suitable for chicken pot-pie, creamed chicken, soup, or croquettes. The larger broiler and fryer (3½ pounds) is excellent roasted. The older birds usually have more fat.

Turkeys are good buys most of the year. A large turkey (over 16 pounds) is your best buy—it has more meat in proportion to bone, and usually costs less per pound than a smaller one. In deciding on the size of a turkey, consider how well your family likes it or if you can freeze part of it to prevent loss. Remember, food is not a bargain if you get more than your family can use. Turkey may be prepared in a variety of ways to maintain your family's interest.

Eggs are an excellent protein food and may be used in place of meat. Buy refrigerated eggs. Low temperature is very important in keeping them fresh. Buy Grade A for poaching, scrambling, cooking in the shell, and frying; Grade B is satisfactory for baking, and other cooking



purposes. Food value is not affected by grade or color of shell.

Size of U.S. graded eggs is based on the minimum total weight of a dozen eggs: extra large—27 ounces per dozen; large—24 ounces; medium—21 ounces; and small—18 ounces. Large eggs are generally not the best buy because this size is most popular. You can expect to find seasonal bargain prices on the medium size from April to December. Medium eggs to be as good a buy as large eggs should be priced one-eighth less. Small eggs should be one-fourth less than large. If the price spread is greater than this, buy the smaller eggs. You'll get more for your money.

Fish—Some varieties of frozen fish fillets cost less per serving than whole fish and are quick and easy to prepare. Canned pink salmon and dark tuna are cheaper than red salmon and light tuna—all are equal in food value. Flake or chunk style tuna and salmon are cheaper than solid pack. All are equally good for many dishes, such as creamed tuna or salmon cakes.

Dry beans and peas, lentils, nuts, and peanut butter are good protein foods and can be used as less expensive alternates for meat. Home-made pea soup and baked beans usually cost less than ready-to-serve.

Protein Bargains from the Meat Group

Foods Which Supply One-Third of the Protein Needed Daily by a Man Age 25

Cooked lean meat or fish -----	2½ to 3½ ounces
Cooked or canned beans -----	1½ cups
American cheese -----	4 ounces
Cottage cheese -----	¾ cup
Peanut butter -----	5 tablespoons
Eggs -----	3
Bacon -----	10 slices
Frankfurters -----	4
Bologna -----	7 slices
Fish sticks -----	6

To choose the best meat buys in protein, compare the cost per serving of cooked lean meats—equal size servings of the cooked lean from most cuts and types of meat, poultry, and fish provide similar amounts of protein. Exceptions to this rule include sausages and bacon.

To see which foods are protein bargains, compare the costs of quantities of different foods that furnish equal amounts of protein. Dry beans, cheese, peanut butter, and eggs always rate as a good buy in protein.

Milk Group

Many homemakers save on milk by using a three-way plan—some fresh, some canned, and some dry. A family of four will use about 1,095 quarts per year. How much does this cost? It depends on what kind you buy and milk prices in your community. Here is one example.

	Price per quart	Cost per year 1,095 quarts
Milk, fresh homogenized	27¢	\$295
Milk, vitamin D added, fresh homogenized	28¢	\$307
Non-fat milk (fresh) or buttermilk	21¢	\$230
Non-fat dry milk		
(3-qt. pkg.)	10¢	\$110
(12-qt. pkg.)	8¢	\$ 88
(12-qt. in 1-qt. pkgs.)	10¢	\$110
Evaporated milk (in 14½-oz. cans)		
Per quart well-known brand	16¢	\$175
Per quart well-known store brand	14¢	\$153

Save on milk by using at least part of it as fluid, non-fat evaporated, or powdered. Non-fat milk provides as much protein and calcium as whole milk with only about half as many calories. Whole milk has more vitamin A and fat than skim milk. Vitamin A in the form of carotene is also found in abundance in deep green and yellow vegetables, so you don't have to rely on dairy products for all of the vitamin A. You may save money by making your own cheese spreads rather than buying them.

Fruit and Vegetable Group

Choose vegetables, fresh, frozen, or canned, according to cost and family preference. Fresh vegetables and fruits in season may be less expensive than frozen or canned. Compare waste and convenience of fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables. Also consider food value when buying fruits and vegetables. For example: broccoli, turnip greens, collards, kale, spinach, and other dark leafy greens are higher in vitamin A than lettuce or other light-green vegetables.

Some of the lower-priced canned vegetables are satisfactory in casseroles and soups. For example, canned tomatoes vary mostly in size, maturity, and color, so lower grades are often a good buy.

Citrus fruits and juices are always a good buy for vitamin C value, whether you choose the fresh, canned, or frozen form. Fresh oranges, grapefruit, and tangerines are usually "best buys" when in season. Apricot, apple, pear, prune, and pineapple juices are low in vitamin C unless the vitamin has been added. For variety and economy, include some of these other good sources of vitamin C: Canned tomatoes, tomato juice, fresh tomatoes (in season), green pepper, broccoli, green cabbage, and "greens." When cantaloupes and strawberries are in season, they, too, are economical sources of vitamin C.

At "season end" sales, canned or frozen fruits are generally cheaper than fresh. Use these "sale" foods soon after purchase because nutritional value gradually decreases during storage—and continues to decrease. Fruits canned in heavy syrup cost more and have more calories than those canned in light syrup. Special "dietetic packs" are the most expensive. They contain no added sugar but may contain sugar substitutes.

Bread and Cereal Group

Are these a big item in your budget? Compare prices of cereals! Compare sizes of boxes, brands, sugared, shaped, individual packages.

Best buys are 100 percent whole wheat or enriched breads; whole grain, enriched or fortified cereal; parboiled rice, enriched cornmeal and grits. These foods supply valuable amounts of protein, iron, several B-vitamins, and food energy. Check labels to see if breads and flour are enriched.

Penny-saving Hints

1. Bread is less expensive than rolls. Day-old bread, when available, can save you money.

2. Hot cereals cost less than ready-to-eat varieties. Sugared cereals cost more than unsweetened. The small variety packages of cereal add to the cost. When is it worth it to you?

3. Special breads and fancy crackers may cost more and may have less food value than whole grain, enriched, or fortified cereal products. When are they worth more to you?

Put These Ideas into Practice

1. If you don't know your food costs, keep a 1-month record of the money spent for food. Be sure to subtract the amount spent on non-food items.

2. Plan "skeleton" outline of menus before you shop. Shop with a list.

3. Check menus by the four food groups to see if you are serving your family adequate meals. Check at least once a week.

4. Study weekly food advertisements on specials and apply suggestions given in this leaflet. Give an example of a good buy you made and why it was a good buy.

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